# Applying the STAD Learning Model to Improve Student Outcomes in Islamic Faith and Morality Education: Evidence from Junior High Schools

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**Abstract.** This study investigates the impact of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model on enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes in Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic faith and morality) education among Class VII C students at an Islamic junior high school in Jember. Employing the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology, the study was conducted over two cycles involving 26 students. Results revealed that the STAD model, supported by PowerPoint media, significantly improved student activity from 49% pre-cycle to 96% in Cycle II. Similarly, average learning scores increased from 67 to 86, with classical completeness reaching 92%. These findings underscore the effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies in fostering active participation and academic success in Islamic education.

**Keywords:** faith and morality education, learning model, learning outcomes.

## 1 Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar in fostering individuals' intellectual, moral, and social development. It is a critical instrument for achieving national development goals by enhancing human resources in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains [1]. In Indonesia, this vision is firmly established in Article 1, Paragraph 1 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which defines education as a deliberate and structured effort to cultivate learning environments and processes that enable students to actively develop their potential in religious and spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and essential life skills [2]. This comprehensive educational approach is crucial in shaping individuals who contribute positively to societal advancement.

Junior high schools face significant challenges despite the vital role of education, Islamic faith, and morality education, or Aqidah Akhlak. Conventional teaching methods—characterized by lectures, rote memorization, and minimal student interaction—have led to low engagement, passive learning behaviors, and suboptimal academic outcomes. Observations of a sample Islamic junior high school revealed that students exhibited limited participation, a lack of collaboration, and poor academic performance in Islamic faith and morality education, hindering their ability to internalize and apply moral values in daily life. These challenges necessitate innovative teaching approaches that foster a more active and effective learning environment.

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One promising strategy to address these challenges is the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model. STAD emphasizes teamwork and collaborative learning [3], encouraging students to work in diverse groups [4] to master instructional content. This model has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in enhancing student engagement [5], fostering peer interaction [6], and improving academic achievement [7]. Integrating STAD with PowerPoint media further enriches the learning experience by providing visually engaging and structured instructional content, catering to various learning styles, and increasing student motivation.

Some research on the STAD model already exists, such as that conducted by Ranmechai, which found that the STAD cooperative learning technique significantly improved learning achievement and generated highly satisfactory learning experiences for mathematics pre-service teachers [8]. Several studies have demonstrated STAD's positive impact on learning outcomes in English [9], accounting [7], and Balaghah [10].

However, research on applying the STAD model in Islamic faith and morality education remains limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian junior high schools. This study seeks to fill this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of the STAD cooperative learning model, supported by PowerPoint media, in improving student engagement and learning outcomes in Islamic faith and morality education. The study aims to determine how this approach fosters an active, collaborative, and effective learning environment, enhancing students' academic performance and moral development.

By providing empirical evidence on the benefits of integrating cooperative learning models with multimedia tools, this research contributes to advancing instructional strategies in Islamic education. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for educators and policymakers seeking to implement innovative and student-centered teaching methods that align with national educational objectives and support the holistic development of students.

## 2 Method

This study utilized the Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology to systematically investigate and address educational challenges in a real-world classroom setting. CAR is designed to analyze the cause-and-effect relationships of educational interventions, documenting the process from initial implementation to outcomes. This approach allows researchers to iteratively refine teaching strategies while improving the quality of learning outcomes. CAR combines qualitative and experimental elements that are distinct from other research methodologies. As outlined by Kemmis, McTaggart, and Nixon, CAR operates through a cyclical process comprising four key stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection[11].

In the planning stage, the researcher collaborated with a teacher-collaborator to identify specific classroom challenges and develop an intervention tailored to meet the needs of Class VII C students at a State Madrasa Tsanawiya of Jember, Indonesia. The intervention was carefully designed to address the context, goals, and curriculum requirements while incorporating the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model supported by PowerPoint media.

The action stage involved implementing the intervention in the classroom. The teacher-collaborator played a central role in executing the plan, ensuring it aligned with students' needs and the educational objectives. PowerPoint media helped create a visually engaging and interactive learning environment, enhancing student motivation and understanding of Islamic faith and morality education.

During the observation stage, data were collected to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness. This process involved monitoring student engagement, participation, and academic performance through various tools, such as observation sheets, field notes, and student assessments. The teacher-collaborator actively contributed by observing student behaviors and interactions, recording insights, and providing immediate feedback. This practitioner's perspective complemented the researcher's analysis, ensuring a holistic evaluation of the intervention.

The reflection stage focused on analyzing the data collected during observation to assess the intervention's success and identify areas for improvement. The researcher and teacher-collaborator collaboratively reviewed the findings, discussing what worked well and refining strategies for subsequent cycles. This iterative process ensured that the intervention evolved to address the student's needs and learning objectives better.

This collaborative approach enriched the research by integrating the teacher's practical experience with the researcher's theoretical expertise. It also empowered the teacher as a co-researcher, fostering professional development and a deeper understanding of effective teaching practices. The research maintained academic rigor and real-world relevance by blending theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

The primary objective of this study was to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in Aqidah Akhlak. This group was chosen because seventh-grade students transition from elementary to junior high school, necessitating an adaptive and engaging approach to ensure effective learning. Observations revealed challenges such as low participation and poor academic performance, with average scores falling below the Minimum Competency Criteria. Based on these conditions and the specific characteristics of Class VII C students, the school's curriculum head recommended the STAD method as a suitable teaching strategy. In an interview, the curriculum head stated: "The best method is one that effectively addresses low student scores. I suggest using the STAD method. It encourages teamwork and helps students absorb material more easily. Although it is a traditional approach, it remains effective and offers many benefits." In response, this study implemented the STAD cooperative learning model, supported by PowerPoint media, as a practical solution to improve student activeness and learning outcomes in the Islamic faith and morality education subject.

## 3 Result

### 3.1 Pre-cycle

At the pre-cycle stage, student learning activeness was significantly below average, with only 49% of students actively participating in the learning process. Additionally, the post-test results revealed an average score of 67, with a classical completeness rate of 34.6%, which fell short of the predetermined minimum completeness criteria (MCC) of 71. These results

indicate that the existing learning model failed to engage students effectively or support their understanding of the material.

The data from the Final School Examination further underscore these challenges, with average scores for the Islamic faith and morality education subject ranging between 60 and 65. These low scores reflect the inadequacy of the learning process in fostering meaningful comprehension. The MCC set by the school for this subject is 71, yet the students' performance consistently fell below this threshold, highlighting gaps in their understanding and retention of the lessons.

On January 2, 2023, theoretical classroom observations revealed that the instructional approach relied heavily on conventional methods, including lectures and question-and-answer sessions. This one-directional teaching style limited student engagement and failed to stimulate active participation. The lack of innovative and interactive teaching strategies contributed to students' passive learning behaviors, further impeding their academic outcomes and overall learning experience.

The following are the results of an interview with UH, a morality education teacher, regarding student learning outcomes, methods of material delivery, student responses during Akidah Akhlak lessons, and the rationale for selecting specific evaluation methods:

> “Student learning outcomes are generally satisfactory; however, many students still fail to meet the expected standards in Class VII C. The instructional material is typically delivered using various methods, such as lectures and group discussions. However, I have predominantly employed one-way, teacher-centered learning approaches. Blackboard-based media are commonly used to support material delivery. Despite explanations provided during lessons, many students remain disengaged, often chatting amongst themselves, showing a lack of enthusiasm for learning, and participating minimally in classroom activities. Only a few students respond when questions are posed, regardless of whether they understand the material.”
>
> Thus far, my teaching methodology has relied on conventional practices, such as lectures and question-and-answer sessions, focusing on the teacher as the sole source of knowledge. Unfortunately, this approach has resulted in passive learning behaviors among students. Some students even fall asleep during class, while others appear disinterested. However, a few students do actively listen and engage with the material. Many senior teachers, including myself, follow traditional teaching models inherited from previous generations, prioritizing a teacher-dominated framework. Consequently, my instructional practices have been shaped by these long-standing traditions.
>
> Assessments are conducted after the completion of each learning unit to evaluate student learning. These evaluations are complemented by daily assignments designed to gauge the depth of students' understanding. The Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC) is set at 71. However, achieving this benchmark has been challenging for many students."

In summary, while traditional teaching methods have been adequate in delivering instructional content, they fall short of engaging students or meeting the diverse learning needs. These findings underscore the necessity of adopting more interactive and student-centered

approaches to improve learning outcomes and foster a more dynamic educational environment.

The teacher's perspective is corroborated by interview data collected from one of the students, who stated:

> "The subjects are enjoyable, but at times, I feel bored. That causes me to lose focus on the teacher's explanations and struggle to achieve good grades."

These findings highlight key challenges encountered during the learning process, including student boredom and a lack of enthusiasm, which may hinder active participation and academic performance.

### 3.2 Cycle 1 and 2

The Classroom Action Research was conducted in two cycles. Cycle 1 occurred from March 28 to April 18, 2023, while Cycle 2 was carried out on November 18 and 20, 2023. The research involved researchers, collaborators, and a teacher (UH) facilitating the learning process during both cycles.

In Cycle 1, the students' learning activeness reached 75%, while in Cycle 2, it increased significantly to 96%, categorized as "many active students." This improvement demonstrates the achievement of success indicators for enhancing learning activeness. Changes in student behavior and activities observed during the study are as follows:

a. Students showed significant improvement in their readiness to receive the material;

b. Their ability to analyze material presented by the teacher was evaluated as good;

c. Group cohesiveness was rated as very strong;

d. The learning environment became more engaging as students responded actively to the material provided;

e. Students demonstrated diligence and accuracy in answering the teacher's questions and producing correct responses.

In addition to learning activeness, the study also observed improvements in student learning outcomes. In Cycle 1, the average score was 77, with 77% of students achieving classical completeness. In Cycle 2, the average score rose to 86, with classical completeness reaching 92%. That indicated that more students completed the Akidah Akhlak subject matter on the *Exemplary Story of Prophet Ibrahim AS*. The results in Cycle 1 surpassed the Minimum Completeness Criteria (71.00), but further improvements were targeted in Cycle 2.

By the end of Cycle 2, applying the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) learning model, supported by PowerPoint media, proved effective in increasing motivation and learning outcomes among the seventh-grade students in Akidah Akhlak. The approach was deemed successful and sufficient.

Observations from the pre-cycle, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2 stages revealed a progressive increase in students' average learning activeness and academic performance. The following table compares the outcomes across these stages:

Table 2. Comparison of Student Learning Activity at Pre-Cycle, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2 Stages

| Learning Activity Score | Pre-Cycle | Cycle I | Cycle II |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **49%** | **75%** | **96%** |

Table 3. Comparison of Student Learning Outcomes at Pre-Cycle, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2 Stages

| | Pre-Cycle | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Average Learning Outcome** | 67 | 77 | 86 |
| **Classical Completion** | 34,6% | 77% | 92% |

The data presented in the two tables indicate a significant improvement across the cycles, from the pre-cycle to Cycle II, in both students learning activeness and learning outcomes. Specifically, the percentage of student learning activeness increased from 49% in the pre-cycle to 75% in Cycle I and further to 96% in Cycle II. Similarly, the average student learning outcomes showed a marked progression, rising from 67 in the pre-cycle to 77 in Cycle I and 92 in Cycle II. These results demonstrate that implementing the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Division) model, supported by PowerPoint media, effectively enhances student engagement and academic performance.

The learning process was observed and revealed to be simple. The observation sheets' analysis, which tracked student learning activities and teacher actions in the classroom, showed that the classroom environment was predominantly characterized by activities such as note-taking on the blackboard, lecturing, and assigning tasks. These methods appear less engaging for the students, resulting in reduced participation. Consequently, students exhibit passive behaviors, demonstrate limited creativity, and ultimately perceive the learning experience as monotonous and uninspiring.

## 4 Discussion

### 4.1 The effectiveness of the STAD model in improving student engagement and learning outcomes

The findings of this study demonstrate that learning activeness impacts student learning outcomes significantly. That aligns with prior research, which emphasizes the influence of both internal and external factors on learning outcomes [12]. Internal factors include aspects such as (1) student character, (2) attitude toward learning, (3) motivation, (4) concentration, (5) ability to process learning materials, (6) exploration of learning outcomes, (7) self-efficacy, and (8) learning habits. External factors, on the other hand, encompass (1) teacher-related variables, (2) the social environment, including peer influence, (3) the school curriculum, and (4) the availability of facilities and infrastructure [13].

This study's results align with previous findings on the effectiveness of the Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) strategy in fostering student motivation, activeness, and

learning outcomes. For instance, Karaca [14], in the study titled “A Paradigm Shift of Learning in Maritime Education amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic,” highlighted that the STAD approach significantly improved learning outcomes in electrical circuit education. Student performance improved from an average of 67.47 in Cycle 1 to 74.78 in Cycle 2, with 78.30% of students responding positively to the STAD strategy.

Similarly, Chen et al. [15] reported significant improvements in student learning outcomes in their research on landslide susceptibility modeling. In their study, the average score increased from 68.00 in Cycle 1 to 74.40, with 84% of students meeting the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC). This improvement continued in Cycle 2, with an average score of 82.20 and all students (100%) meeting the MCC.

Further supporting evidence comes from Villegas et al. [16], who demonstrated that integrating the STAD model into an online education framework led to substantial gains. In Cycle 1, student scores increased by 2.50 points to 77.50, with a 15.50% rise in the completion rate to 62.50%. By Cycle 3, the average score rose to 84.84, with an 87.50% completion rate, reflecting the model's efficacy in improving engagement and academic performance.

The STAD approach's effectiveness stems from its emphasis on cooperative learning and peer interaction. This model encourages students to work in teams, share knowledge, and support one another, fostering a collaborative and dynamic learning environment. Additionally, integrating structured visual aids, such as PowerPoint presentations, caters to diverse learning styles, maintaining student engagement and interest.

A conducive learning atmosphere is critical for achieving educational goals. Such an environment is created when students feel comfortable and actively interact with teachers and peers. Teachers play a pivotal role in this process by designing effective learning plans, selecting appropriate teaching media, and implementing strategies that align with students' characteristics. For instance, using images, audio, videos, and animations can make learning more engaging and relatable, enhancing students' understanding and retention.

In Islamic education, the STAD model has been particularly effective in achieving educational objectives related to moral and spiritual development. Aqidah Akhlak, as a core subject in Islamic education, aims to instill ethical principles and strengthen belief systems. However, challenges such as low student participation, limited collaboration, and suboptimal achievement levels persist, hindering the internalization of moral values.

Addressing these challenges requires adopting innovative teaching strategies, such as the STAD model, which aligns with the 2013 Curriculum's emphasis on fostering student discipline, responsibility, creativity, and innovation. This curriculum also underscores the importance of moral character and academic excellence, which are integral to preparing students for success in both academic and non-academic fields.

Ultimately, teachers must convey knowledge and create an engaging and supportive learning environment that motivates students to explore, synthesize, and apply their learning. By leveraging the STAD model and similar cooperative learning strategies, educators can enhance learning outcomes, promote collaboration, and empower students to achieve their full potential.

One of the key benefits of the STAD model is the interaction between peers in the learning group. Each member's involvement and interactivity in the learning relationship affect their enthusiasm and motivation to collaborate and spur their potential. That, in turn, triggers an increase in student learning outcomes. This provides insight into the importance of interaction between learners in learning. As stated by Widyasari, increased student interaction through cooperative learning models can improve learning outcomes [17].

Furthermore, Moodley revealed that peer interaction through group work and peer assessment can enhance students' experience in blended learning courses [18]. It is also supported by Tenenbaum et al., who said that peer interaction could enhance student learning but is not more effective than child-adult interaction [19]. Their meta-analysis of 71 studies involving 7,103 participants aged 4 to 18 found that peer interaction significantly enhances learning outcomes compared to other learning conditions across genders and age groups.

At the same time, promoting collaboration through group work in the classroom has many benefits for student engagement. Some research shows the positive impact of collaborative learning models on learners. Among them is the one conducted by Bohanon et al who found that collaborative techniques in the classroom can enhance student engagement [20]. Similarly, Theobald et al. said group work could enhance cognitive engagement in higher education [21]. Besides the benefits, collaborative work could promote positive classroom social experiences and student relationships [22].

### 4.2 Integrating the STAD model and PowerPoint media

Based on the results of the actions taken in both cycles in this study, it can be understood that STAD model learning combined with PowerPoint media has succeeded in making learning more effective. The integration of structured visual aids, such as PowerPoint presentations, has been shown to accommodate diverse learning styles [23] [24], thus maintaining student engagement [25] and interest in the learning process. Research indicates that visual aids enhance information retention [26] [27] by presenting concepts in a clear and organized manner, facilitating comprehension for visual learners [28] while supporting auditory learners [26] through verbal explanations synchronized with the slides. Additionally, PowerPoint presentations enable teachers to incorporate multimedia elements [23], such as images, charts, and videos, stimulating students' curiosity and encouraging active participation. These features make PowerPoint an effective tool for addressing the varied needs of learners in increasingly diverse classrooms [29].

Furthermore, PowerPoint presentations foster an interactive learning environment that keeps students motivated and attentive. Studies have demonstrated that structured visual aids contribute to a higher level of student engagement by breaking the monotony of traditional lecture-based teaching [28]. The sequential nature of PowerPoint slides allows for the progressive disclosure of content, helping to sustain interest and maintain focus throughout the lesson [30]. Additionally, teachers can leverage these presentations to facilitate collaborative activities and discussions [31], aligning with contemporary pedagogical approaches emphasizing student-centered learning [32]. These attributes underline the importance of incorporating visual aids like PowerPoint into classroom instruction to enhance educational outcomes effectively.

The combination of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) cooperative learning model with PowerPoint media significantly contributes to innovative teaching methods in Islamic education, specifically for Islamic faith and morality education subjects. This approach enhances traditional pedagogical practices and aligns with the 21st-century educational emphasis on interactive and student-centered learning. By fostering collaborative teamwork, STAD encourages students to participate in the learning process [33], promoting critical thinking [34] and interpersonal skills [35]. PowerPoint media complements this model by providing structured, visually engaging content that caters to diverse learning styles, thus maintaining student interest and improving knowledge retention. Together, these tools address the challenges of teaching Islamic faith and morality education, such as limited engagement and passive learning, by creating a dynamic and inclusive classroom environment that supports moral and spiritual development. The research findings demonstrate that this integrated method significantly improves student engagement and learning outcomes, underscoring its value as a practical and scalable solution for Islamic education.

## 5 Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, implementing the cooperative learning model of the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) type, supported by PowerPoint media, effectively enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes in Islamic faith and morality education. This improvement is evident from the increase in learning activeness, progressing from 49% in the pre-cycle to 75% in Cycle 1 and 92% in Cycle 2, which exceeded the predetermined indicators. Similarly, student learning outcomes showed a significant upward trend, with average scores rising from 67 in the pre-cycle to 77 in Cycle I and 86 in Cycle II, and classical completeness improving from 34.6% to 77% and ultimately 92%. These results underscore the success of the STAD model combined with multimedia tools in fostering active participation and academic achievement despite encountering specific challenges during implementation.

The findings of this study have implications that extend beyond the immediate context of the school. By demonstrating how a cooperative learning model like STAD can cultivate an engaging, collaborative, and productive learning environment, this study provides valuable insights for improving educational practices in diverse settings. Integrating multimedia tools such as PowerPoint further highlights the importance of leveraging technology to cater to diverse learning needs and styles, ensuring more inclusive and practical instruction.

More broadly, the study underscores the potential of innovative, student-centered teaching methods to address common educational challenges, such as low engagement and suboptimal learning outcomes. The success of this approach suggests its adaptability across various subjects and grade levels, particularly in fostering skills critical for the 21st century, including teamwork, critical thinking, and adaptability. Educators and policymakers can draw on these findings to design and implement instructional strategies that promote holistic student development, ultimately contributing to broader educational reform and the achievement of national education goals.

This study focused specifically on the Islamic faith and morality education and used PowerPoint as a supporting media tool. As a result, the findings need to be more generalizable

to other classes, schools, or subjects. The study only measured short-term improvements in student engagement and learning outcomes without examining long-term impacts or knowledge retention. Future research could expand the scope to include multiple subjects, classes, and schools and explore the sustained effects of the STAD model over time. Investigating the use of other digital tools and gathering insights from teachers and students about their experiences could further enhance the understanding and application of cooperative learning strategies.

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